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Westward, Ho!

— BY —

FRANCES I. KATZENBERGER.

AUTHOR OF

"HE WOULD HAVE ME BE BRAVE."

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ILLUSTRATED BY

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Map Sydney 33.

Dedicated

to the

Memory of the Sturdy Pioneers.

WHEN in its primeval splendor this vast and grand domain
Was one dense and tangled forest, or rank and grassy plain;
Before a hand was uplifted to mar its strange, wild beauty,
Or the power of strength and might was usurped by that of duty;
Through all this awful grandeur here the wild beasts roamed at will,
Some through the lowlands chasing went, while others chose the hill.
The alligator and the beaver swarmed the river and the lake,
While the hissing serpent went gliding through the brake;
The antler's noiseless tread and then its swift retreat,
When before the screaming panther it went with flying feet.

AND when this savage cry rang out upon the perfumed air,
All the fearful, timid creatures went bounding to their lair,
While the fierce with one accord took up the loud refrain
Till all the wilds resounded with one discordant strain;
Here nature's sacrifice unceasingly went on,
As the weak gave up their lives to appease the hunger of the strong.
While the happy birds sang a medley overhead,
Many helpless, trembling creatures to the jaws of death were led;
The silent stars and moon, resplendent and serene,
Witnessed many death struggles by human eyes unseen.

O'ER all the forest's son undaunted walked with proud
majestic step;
Nature's garb his raiment was, the lap of earth his bed.
Walked through all the dangers, while a watchful eye he kept:
The Great Spirit protected him and guarded while he slept.
All things for him created were—the beast, river, and tree,
And no king in his possession felt so secure as he.
Nature provided for her child, and with a lavish hand
Strewed berries, bear, and bison throughout his native land;
But in his savage heart smouldered the fire of deep unrest,
And the love of power stirred in his untutored breast.

SO once in many moons the sachem wise his chieftains
summoned from afar,
And in his mute, impressive way held grave councils of war.
Silent and grum they sat, each one upon his thoughts intent;
But when the wise councilor spake, the ear of every brave was lent.
"I have spoken," said the sachem, and each one beat upon his
breast;
And soon they all in paint and feathers—the garb of war—were
dressed.
Their feet kept time to the whoop and cry which pierced the
distant hill and plain,
Till the mad blood went surging through their frenzied heart
and brain;
The turmoil of the forest by this shrill, unearthly noise was
drowned,
Till by shrieks and frantic leaps fainting, they fell upon the ground.

CALM once again he rose, a new resolve upon his stolid face,
Which naught but honor on the field of carnage had the power to efface.
With eagerness they all went forth, each panting for the fray;
Of all the tribes of red men bold, none were so brave as they.
The hunting ground and battle field were his labor, his life and law,
While all the harder tasks were done by his submissive squaw.
She ne'er sat at a feast which by his lordly form was graced,
And the coldest seat in the wigwam rude was her accustomed place;
She was endowed by Providence with fortitude peculiarly her own;
Both pain and gross injustice she endured without a murmur or a groan.

WHILE fiercely tribe warred against tribe, supremacy to gain
A stronger hand approaching was from across the mighty main;
Far, far away in Genoa, Italy, to a wool comber poor, a son was born,
Who felt God had chosen him a mighty mission to perform.
He first conceived the knowledge that this earth is round,
And hoped that through him a passage new to Asia might be found;
He wished to spread true faith and love around the globe.
But it was eighteen long years from the conception to the consummation of his hope.
God never willed that such patience and brave devotion should be in vain,
And he at last was granted necessary aid by the sovereigns of Spain.

INSPIRED by the holy love which shaped this continent for
you and me,
He started on his journey long to cross the untried sea.
Brave and hopeful still was he, although surrounded by a
murmuring band;
He seemed propelled across the waters by an unseen hand.
They hailed the sight of land with ecstacy which nothing could alloy;
While he sank upon his knees in the fervor of his joy,
And gave thanks to Him who rules the destinies of all,
Planting the banner and the cross upon our own beloved soil.
The natives of the wilds stood meekly by, gazing with wonder
and with awe;
They knew no dread, and only marveled at the sights they saw.

IN their childish minds this splendor a strange enchantment lent;
They thought the ships were white-winged birds, the Spaniards
guests from heaven sent.
But since it is and always was human to be selfish and vain,
Soon the explorer's noble purpose weakened was by avarice
and gain;
Instead of imbuing the savage with a love of peace and loftier
desire,
In his swarthy bosom they kindled soon a fierce, revengeful fire,
The embers of which still do glow, and on and on will glow,
Until the last fierce spirit is at rest and haughty head laid low.
Each paleface then by them was held a bitter foe,
And the blameless alike must reap what a few at random sow.

AND as the news was carried back of the land so strange and new,
The tide of emigration brought the zealous, brave, and true;
Sweet home and friends were left behind, and with loved ones they came,
A place of christian freedom and a home for wife and child to gain.
Alas, how brief the time they were allowed to tread upon our shore,
Until their altar and their chosen spot knew them on earth no more.
None were there to warn the yeoman of the danger lurking near,
When in refreshing sleep he had forgotten pain and fear;
Not one was spared—the innocent, the brave, nor good—
And naught remained but a charred and blackened spot where a humble home once stood.

YEARS dark and perilous went by, in a long and weary train.
Oh, who would read that bloody page of hardship, grief, and pain,
When the rifle was borne to the house of God, and the frugal meal eaten in fear,
For the skulking form of the Indian was ever lurking near.
In the clear, bright light of day, or in the silent watches of the night,
With bitter and persistent hate they crept stealthily after the white.
Cunning, courageous, crafty, they proved a formidable foe.
They ever feigned a friendly air to strike a better blow;
They smoked the pipe of peace, laid down their weapons rude, and then
Only in their thirst for victory to take them up again.

THE Indians upon the colonies a savage and relentless war did wage,
When there appeared among them one who claimed that he was neither prophet, peer, nor sage;
But from his kind, benevolent face beamed forth a love for all,
Which touched the fiercest heart through wormwood, hate and gall.
"We meet upon the broad pathway of good faith and good will," he said,
When they under a stately elm for open council met.
A lasting covenant was made, without a notary or oath to bind,
"We'll live in love with William Penn and his children as long as sun and moon shall shine."
His parting words, "Dear friends, my love salutes you all," a soothing balm did lend,
And ever after he who donned the Quaker's sober garb was from harm exempt.

AS moon succeeded moon, and season followed season, and
years in train of years did flow,
Many a hardy woodman the cry took up, "Westward ho!
Westward ho!"
Through the solemn silence came back in tones so soft and low,
A distant, cheery answering voice, "Westward ho! Westward ho!"
As the balmy eve approached they stopped the long, white-crested
train,
That those faithful brutes had drawn over woodland, marsh, and
plain.
Their wants supplied before the rosy hue had left the West,
Man and beast, both side by side, they lay them down to rest.
The mothers, babes, and invalids were placed in the sheltered
tent to sleep,
While trusty sentinels without their silent watch did keep.

LONG ere to the approach of day the sun her regal presence sent,
All was action, life, and cheer around that busy tent.
Then upon the patient necks once more the yokes were placed,
While the lagging spirits of man and beast by the morning air were braced.
Then up, and patiently and hopefully away they go,
While all along the line the cry arose, "Westward ho! Westward ho!"
Then when the war-cry of the Indians rang out upon the breeze,
All was hurry and confusion as before the dreaded sound they flee.
Many staunch and hopeful hearts were doomed to perish on the way,
And their ambitions and desires did in unmarked graves decay.

NOTHING daunted the survivors; step by step an onward course they fought,
As for themselves and families those western homes they sought.
At last our forefathers, through dangers and trials and sorrows reached this fertile spot,
And from the swarthy owners those broad, rich acres bought.
But while the woodman's axe rang out so loud and clear,
From behind each bush and tree a pair of vengeful eyes did peer.
They made sales and promises which they ever set at naught,
And among those early settlers a constant dread and terror wrought;
A terror which bid fair even the stanchest heart to quell,
And by the bow and arrow and the tomahawk many a paleface fell.

THE natives grew more troublesome, hostilities increased,
While the government made overtures and just men sued for peace.
The safety of the settlements called for a prompt, decisive stand,
So men well versed in warfare dread were chosen to command.
With valor they went forth this national foe to meet,
But by prowess and intrigue were driven to retreat.
While they knew how the modes of modern war to wield,
They in confusion and dismay were forced to leave the field.
While their courage was applauded, and a hearty hand put forth to greet,
There was written in the annals of the day the hopeless word "defeat."

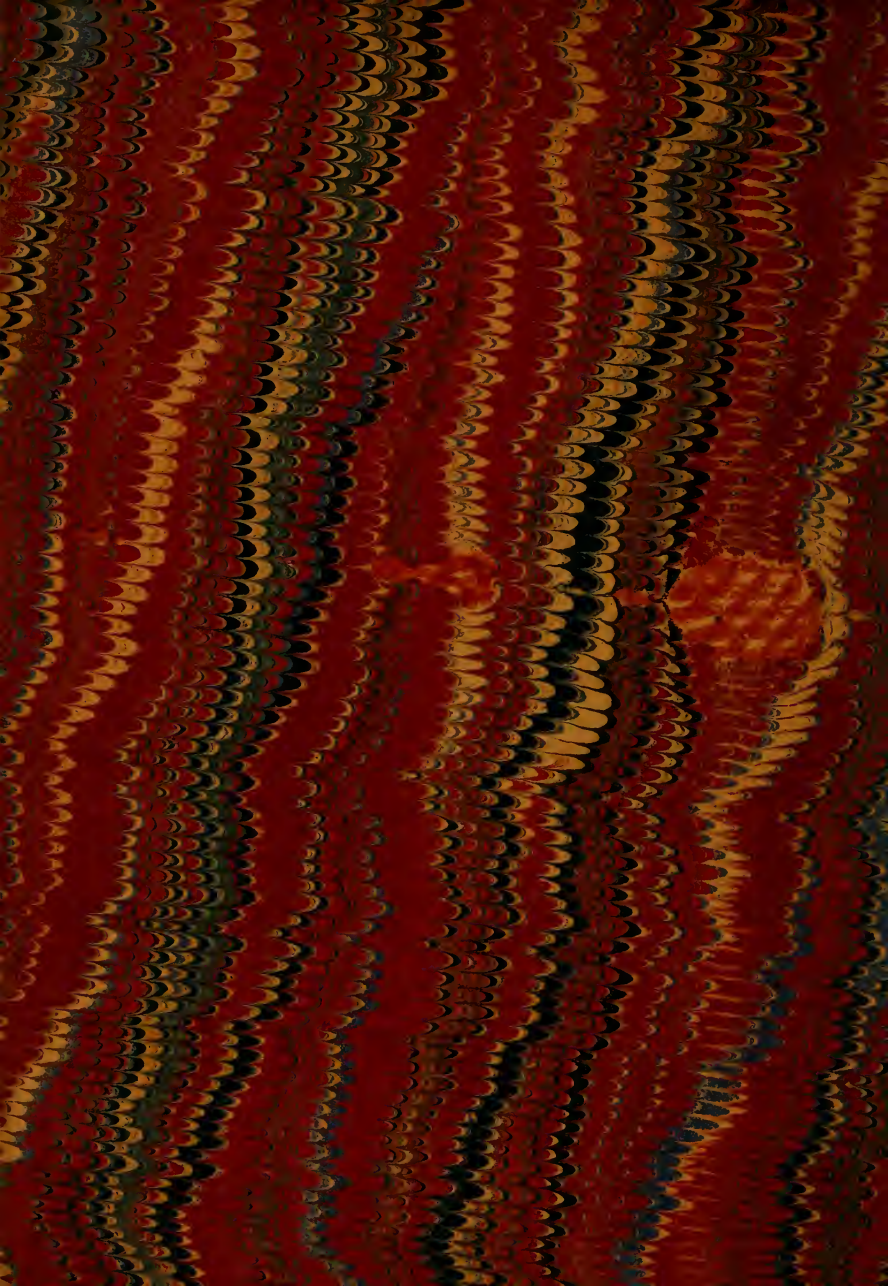
BUT as failure sometimes leads to renewed effort and a loftier aim,
So in the line of warriors the conquering hero came.
Thus in a word of warning did a wise old chieftain speak:
"Think well. The white man is led by a brave who never sleeps;
To him the night and day no separate meaning bear;
With all the skill of our young men we have never taken him unawares."
But with the rashness of the young they treated the old warrior with contempt,
And against his words of counsel into deadly warfare went.
It remained for our hero those wily savages the art of war to teach,
And prove the bravery of our race far beyond impeach.

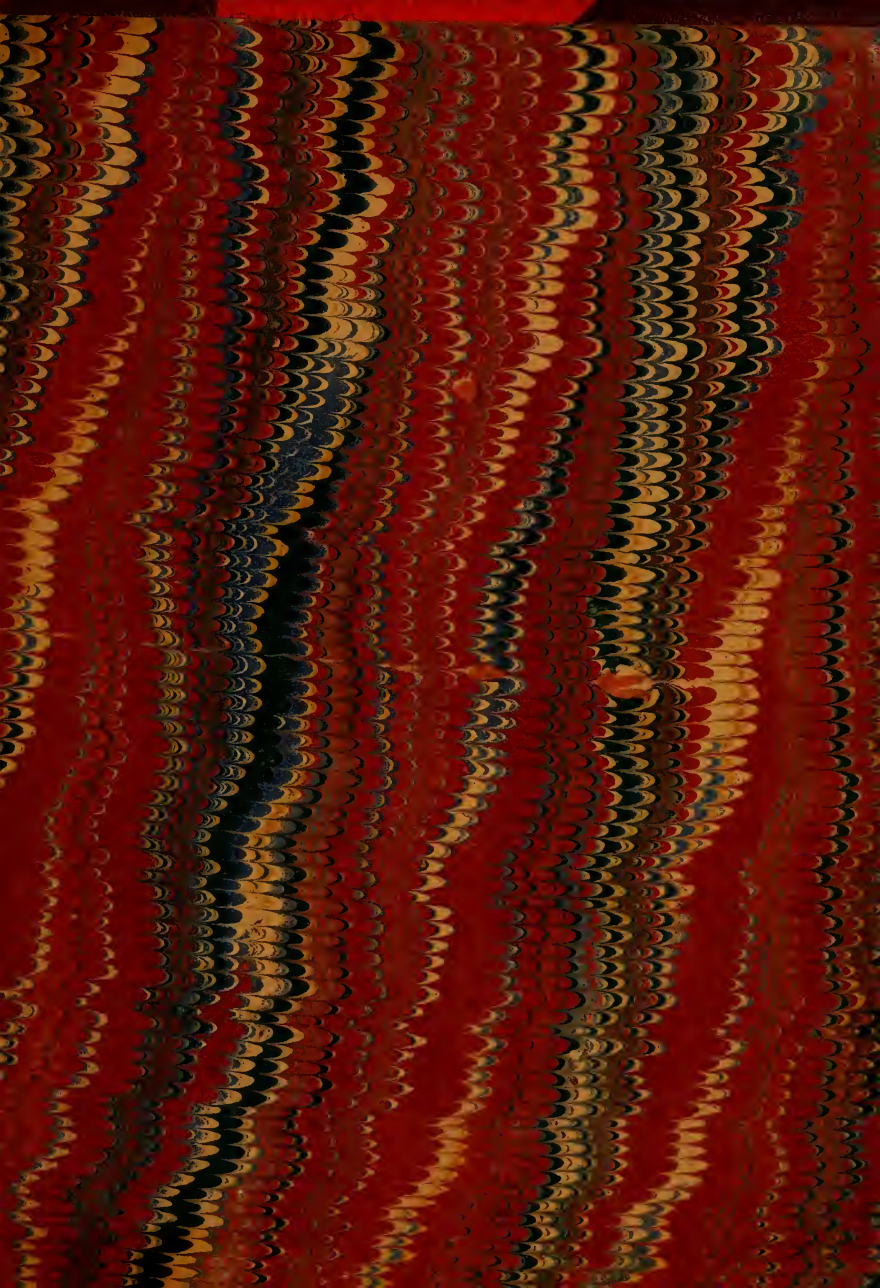
TO his overtures of peace they a listening ear denied,
And with sullen persistency his strength and power defied.
Although his heart recoiled at the sacrifice, he his army into open battle led,
And there the blood of defiant Indians and British allies shed.
Victory after victory crowned his efforts brave on every hand,
Until the foe through terror and dismay was driven to disband.
The hand of order and discipline they were not able to restrain,
And the ground they firmly fought was covered with their slain.
The glorious gates of civilization were opened wide.
Thus skill and blood redeemed the soil we now possess with pride.

CONQUERED but not subdued, their savage hearts were still
averse to peace,
Until won by the victor's leniency, they agreed hostilities to cease.
They met to establish friendship and good will and blot out
former stains,
Till their native passionate blood flowed calmly through their veins.
For weeks the council fires flared up and then would lowly burn,
That they the wish of every tribe and chieftain bold might learn.
Although the hatchet that was buried then has turned to rust
and the handle fallen to decay,
And the pipe they smoked in peace has returned to its former clay,
The tribute to our hero stands in history a bright and shining page;
The warrior's hand then given him never afterward was lifted
against our race.

WHERE are those brawny forms with their unbending spirit
and their piercing sight,
Which trod those fertile vales and scaled the mountain's height?
The eye has lost its luster bright, the spirit has been curbed, and
in restraint the few
Who still exist must bow to laws galling, irksome, and new.
The many have gone with the sturdy oak, their bones are
mingling with our turf,
Their spirits have soared to the happy hunting ground, the
redman's hope on earth.
All honor to the brave men who fought, struggled long and bled,
And with their strength and lives did hew the paths that we
in safety tread.
Through them the stern decrees of fate have swept the natives
from our land,
And thus will bring a cycle to a close with a strong and mighty
hand.

MAN is a stream whose source by faith we trace back to the bosom of our God—
A faith that sails to loftier heights and sets philosophers at naught.
But through era, age, and epoch strange nations have peopled our earth;
Who can say from thence they came and thus were given birth?
First in the train the Mound Builders came with their mighty array,
Played life's drama upon our stage, and then were swept away;
Then the redskins of the forest, who before a mightier force have fled,
Powerless, ere long their race with the bright western sun will set.
And we are hastening on in obedience to the great and unalterable mind.
Then who will stand and gaze with awe on traces that we leave behind?





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